

makes you free, you

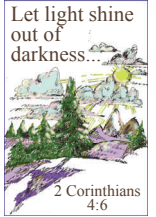


Therefore if the Son

shall be free indeed.

Voice of Freedom

A Ministry of Cedar Valley Community Church



Prison Ministry Good News Letter

Volume 7, Issue 8

November 2009

Grace and peace to all of you from God our heavenly Father, who poured out His divine grace to us through His Son, Christ Jesus. If you have accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior, count on it, you are holy, you are blameless for any sin against God, and you are above reproach, (that is no one, not even God Himself can find any fault in your soul). On the cross of Calvary, Jesus took all our sins and died for them. Three days later Jesus defeated death, defeated satan, rose from the grave and returned to heaven to reign in all honor and glory forever and ever. Jesus alone can repair the damage that sin causes, and that damage is certain eternal death. When Jesus repairs the damage it is not just a new covering over our souls. Jesus makes us perfect, inside and out, in God's eyes. Hear comforting words from the Bible: *"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He [Jesus] has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — if indeed you continue in the faith ..."* (Colossians 1:21-23a) All praise, honor and glory to our King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Christ Jesus, forever and ever.

Jesus always sees us as repairable. He does not tear us apart, throw us in the back of a pickup, and haul us to the landfill as rotting garbage to be buried. Jesus is not into destruction; He is into taking us just as we are bent out of shape with broken, damaged areas rotting in our hearts. He rebuilds us into vessels of honor. It is absolutely amazing how God can use every detail in our lives to bring us into a close walk with Jesus. Look at the detail of Jesus' earthly father, Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter, a man who builds or repairs broken things. I have no doubt that Jesus, as a boy, helped his dad and continued building and repairing wooden items right up to the time He started His ministry at age thirty-three. Then Jesus set out to complete the work that God sent Him here to finish, saving and repairing damaged souls.



Most of my writing deals with stuff I have personally experienced or am currently struggling with. On July 30, a wind storm swept through my town. Behind my garage stood a healthy, forty-five foot walnut tree, but it was no match against the 80 mph wind. Half of the tree broke loose from the trunk and whacked the end of my garage, caving in the end of the roof and knocking the garage two inches off the cement-block foundation. After calling my insurance agent I began sawing the tree for hauling away. I looked at my poor little garage and

assessed the damage. The roof damage was not too major, but the shifting from the foundation was bad. The insurance adjustor came, totaled my garage and sent a check.

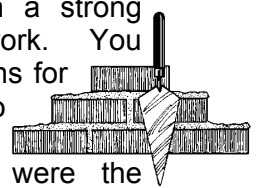
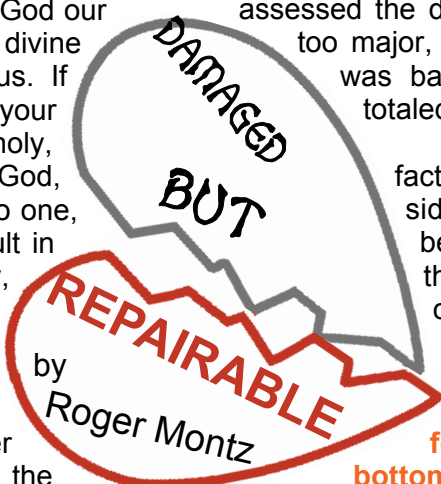
My garage was far from new. In fact, it was structurally unsound. The sides and back were bowed out between two and three inches. Over the years, the cement blocks had cracked and shifted, so it may not have been many more years before they would give away completely.

As I looked at the broken foundation, the rotting top and bottom sill plates, the rotting wall studs and sagging roof, God opened my eyes and used this mess to show me my life.

I was born in 1947. God never ceases to amaze me about small details. From old records I know that my garage was built in 1947, and it must have been the best on the block with a solid cement-block foundation, sturdy hardwood construction and the best siding available. Somewhere in time the owner had taken great care covering the inside framework with three layers of cardboard, and it must have looked nice to him. Little did he realize that the cardboard was holding moisture and slowly rotting the wooden frame. It appeared to me that the previous owner never looked behind the cardboard covering to check the wooden frame's condition.

Thoughts flooded my mind as I began the reconstruction of my garage. God in essence said: "The garage was born the same year as you. The garage had a solid start with a strong foundation and sturdy framework. You also had a solid start in my plans for you. Your parents took you to Sunday school and church every Sunday. Those times were the beginning of your solid foundation with Me. For years you looked good, but do you remember what happened to your life?"

Oh yeah, I remembered, all too well. Somewhere in time I had taken great care to make myself look good by adding layers of false living to cover what was inside of me. I wanted to hide my heart which was slowing rotting from decaying deceit, dishonesty, and the determination to live my life the way I wanted so I could get everything I wanted no matter what it took. I needed to cover my inside framework with layers that made me appear good and successful. The layers included acting as a happily married man, being the Junior Chamber of Commerce president, a regular church goer, an adult Sunday school teacher, a church board member, a successful businessman, well-to-do, and a host of other activities. For me these layers impersonated a healthy life and concealed the rotten truth beneath. I hid my sinful ways of



He brought them out of darkness their chains in pieces.



and the shadow of death, and broke Psalm 117:14

falling deep into sexual lusts, alcoholism, gambling, failed marriages, affairs, and paying to have a child aborted. I fed on greed for money, image, power and control. Yep, anyone looking at me was fooled. Just like the cardboard hid the garage's rotting boards, I used my righteous appearing lifestyle to hide the continuing damage to my life.

Over time, my garage's cement-block foundation, built to hold the garage stable, started cracking and buckling as the rotting framework sagged

outward. Over time the foundation of Christ Jesus, that my parents laid under me, began cracking and buckling as my life of sin consumed and warped my heart. The way I lived was destroying my life and my family.

When the wind blew, the tree fell hard and exposed the real damage to my garage. For me, God's mighty voice of justice rang out, "enough is enough." Justice fell hard on me with five and one-half years in prison, exposing all of the real damage I had covered up for years.

Since the insurance company considered my garage a total loss, I could have leveled it, hauled the debris to the landfill to be buried, and planted grass over the site of the garage. All that would have been left of a once proud garage would be fading memories. God could have left me to live my entire life in totally sinful ways as an unsaved man until buried in my grave, and the only memory of my life would have been as a sex-offender gone to hell.

Thank you Lord Jesus, thank you forever and ever that you are not into throwing people away as if un-repairable. **Your will is clear: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."** (John 3:16)

I labored and toiled as I rescued my garage by lovingly tearing off all the cardboard layers, replacing rotted wood sills, wall studs, rafters and siding. I patiently straightened all the bowed-out framework to plumb, replaced the broken cement block foundation with new blocks, and put on new vinyl siding.

Before I went to prison, Christ Jesus drew me to remember my once stable foundation and accept Him as my Savior. Then, while I was in prison, my



Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus, rescued my damaged heart by lovingly teaching me about His way of living. I asked Him to repair me. He tore off all the destructive layers of a masquerade life-style. He removed the rotting decay caused by living in habitual sins.

Jesus replaced the broken foundation of my youth with a brand new, stronger foundation in Him. In His hands my damaged life was repaired. Jesus placed new values of love in me to hold me up. It was Jesus who

did all the work! I just put the new ways of living where He told me to put them. I listened to Jesus and threw away things that needed thrown away. Yes, Jesus did repair me, and I use His words daily to nail all things together in my life.

Do you have feelings of being utterly damaged and beyond repair because of your crime or sinful living? Do you have a torn heart? Is the darkness of your past overpowering and covering up the light of a new beginning? Rejoice! Jesus, the great hope of Light has come and He will create a new life in you. *"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned."* (Matthew 4:16) **Jesus is the Light!** Jesus came for YOU, not to destroy, but to repair you. *"The spirit of the Lord God is upon Me [Jesus], because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; God the Father has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."* (Isaiah 61:1 and see also Luke 4:18)

My life was damaged by the way I lived. Are you rotting away from the inside out because you don't know Jesus? Do you know Jesus and yet realize you are rotting away from the inside out because you covered your sins with a righteous mask?

Receive this: Christ Jesus is not into destruction and throwing away. Jesus is about saving us and giving us a brand new creation from Him. Jesus is also about repairing and restoring the damage done in our lives.

Do you want to accept Christ Jesus as your Savior? Do you want Jesus to repair you? Right now, simply with a humble heart pray to Jesus, "I am damaged Lord, will you please repair me?"

All you need to do is ask Him. – Roger –



If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, or if for any reason you would like to be taken off, please send a note to *Voice of Freedom*, Cedar Valley Community Church, 3520 Ansborough Avenue, Waterloo, IA 50701.